

DECORATIVE SOCKS WITH THREE-DIMENSIONAL ORNAMENTS AND RELATED INDICIA

Field of Invention

5 This invention relates to an article of clothing having a three-dimensional object attached to it. More specifically, the invention involves a sock having an attached three-dimensional object which relates to indicia on the body of the sock.

Background of the Invention

10 Socks having decorative features have been well-known for many years. For instance, socks with pictures of flowers, cartoon characters and animals depicted on them have appeared in the marketplace for decades. While these socks are entertaining, they have become generic, humdrum and taken for granted by many since at most times the illustrations on the sock are covered by
15 a wearer's pants and/or shoes.

Other socks which were very popular over the past twenty years, especially with young girls and women, are the easily recognized "pom pom" socks. Typically, a pom pom sock comprises a plain white or colored knit sock which is given its identity by a soft fuzzy ball or "pom pom" that is attached to the
20 sock at its opening and towards the rear such that the pom pom is located near the user's Achilles tendon. The pom poms of these socks typically come in a multitude of colors appealing to the particular preferences of a user, and often the color of the pom pom is the same as the colored trim that a sock might possess or perhaps a fruit that is depicted on the sock, such that a red pom pom

would be used in connection with red trim or a strawberry, and a purple pom pom would be used in connection with purple trim or grapes that are depicted on the body of the sock.

While pom pom socks have appealed to consumers, especially women and children for many years, they have a major deficiency. This deficiency stems from the fact that pom poms typically come in a basic spherical configuration having limited flexibility in configuration. Accordingly, although pom poms, which are easily found in arts and crafts supply stores, can be decorated with glitter, sparkles, rhinestones, cut-outs etc., they generally cannot themselves be formed into complex shapes, including animal heads, stars and the like. Accordingly, what a user is left with is a dressed-up fuzzy ball. Moreover, because pom pom socks are generally made for young girls and women, males cannot benefit from them.

Another form of sock having a decorative feature is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,038,413 (Ursino), wherein a decorative bear cover member is located on the side of a sock. This cover member is used both for ornamental purposes as well as to indicate that two particular socks each form part of a pair. Significantly, Ursino discloses cover members that are essentially only two-dimensional. In addition, because the cover members are specifically used to indicate that the socks form part of a unique pair, the socks must necessarily be relatively plain and lack corresponding indicia which can relate one sock to another. Accordingly, except for the cover members, the socks are generally

boring, less appealing, less imaginative and less stimulating than they otherwise could be.

Similarly, other types of known socks that include decorative three-dimensional ornaments are merely plain socks having one or more basic colors combined with an ornament that is either permanently attached to the sock or is selectively removable by virtue of a snap or Velcro. However, the three-dimensional ornaments associated with these socks do not correspond to indicia located on the body of the sock. Accordingly, these socks are also generally boring and less appealing than they otherwise could be.

10 Brief Description of the Invention

In view of the prior art deficiencies, the principle objective of the present invention is to provide a visually appealing sock with a three-dimensional object wherein the object may assume more relatively complex shapes.

Another objective is to provide a visually appealing sock with a three-dimensional object attached to the sock which relates to indicia located on the body of the sock.

A further objective of the present invention is to provide a sock which can be sold as an impulse item and which will be of interest to women and children.

Another further objective of the present invention is to provide a sock that increases the sales and revenue of manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers by increasing the number which can be sold.

An even further objective of the present invention is to provide a sock which can be used as a tool to stimulate and educate young children.

A still further objective of the present invention is to provide a sock that is more entertaining than prior art socks.

A yet further objective of the present invention is to provide a sock that can be worn by both females and males of all ages alike.

5 In its broadest aspects the invention is a sock having one or more three-dimensional objects or ornaments which may assume relatively complex shapes as compared to other prior art socks. Importantly, all of the embodiments of the inventive sock include indicia that is located on the body of the sock, whether in the form of a word, phrase, design, illustration or any combination thereof. This
10 10 indicia has visual, textual and other relationships to the three-dimensional ornament which is attached to the sock at or near its opening where the foot normally is inserted into the sock.

The inventive sock, including all of its components, may be constructed of conventional materials well known in the art, including natural and synthetic
15 15 materials such as cotton, polyester, acrylic, nylon and spandex. Generally, the three-dimensional ornament may take the form of a head of a typical stuffed doll as well as other objects in miniaturized form. Accordingly, the ornament can be in many forms, including a three-dimensional duck head, a cellular phone, a pair of dice, an Easter egg or even well known cartoon characters, including Sponge
20 20 Bob and the Powerpuff Girls. Importantly, these ornaments assume accurate shapes which are consistent with a miniaturized version of these objects.

Depending on the particular embodiments of the invention, the indicia on the sock may be a two-dimensional representation of the three-dimensional

ornament and/or a graphic or visual image which simply corresponds to the ornament in a visual or textual manner. The result is a sock that can be sold as an "impulse item" which all consumers, including adults, believe that they must have. Further, as a result of the accurate shapes that are formed, there is the

5 potential to produce many more styles and embodiments than were previously possible. This provides added value to manufacturers and sellers of the sock who can now have more of what consumers want. Also, the sock is an excellent gift idea whether given to relatives, friends or neighbors. Additionally, due to the relationship between the ornament and indicia, young children wearing these

10 socks can, among other things, learn the difference between a two-dimensional image and a three-dimensional object as well as associate words and pictures with corresponding objects.

Accordingly, this invention provides a sock that is more visually appealing than other prior art socks. By providing a three-dimensional ornament in an abundance of possible complex shapes and figures, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers can respectively increase their overall sales and revenue by providing socks that are more desirable and appealing than prior art socks. As "impulse purchases" and the focus of gift ideas, the socks may provide an excellent marketing tool as well. Further, because the ornament is constructed to relate to indicia on the sock , children will be more entertained and pleased while simultaneously learning new ideas and developing their own thoughts.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an embodiment of the inventive sock wherein the three-dimensional object is generally the same as a two-dimensional picture depicted on the body of the inventive sock;

5 FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view of the embodiment shown in Fig. 1 taken along lines 2- -2;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a second embodiment of the inventive sock wherein the three-dimensional object corresponds to an associated phrase, including words and a number, depicted on the body of the sock;

10 FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a third embodiment of the inventive sock wherein the three-dimensional object corresponds to a design evoked by the three-dimensional object;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a fourth embodiment of the inventive sock wherein the three-dimensional object corresponds to an associated action, i.e.,
15 verbiage, depicted on the body of the sock;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of a fifth embodiment of the inventive sock wherein the three-dimensional object corresponds to both words and images depicted on the body of the sock.

Detailed Description of the Invention

20 Various embodiments of the inventive sock are shown in Figs.1 and Figs. 3 through 6.

As shown in the embodiment of Fig. 1, the sock 10 includes a sock body 12 with a toe end 14 and a rearward opening 16, the latter usually being defined

by a trim edge 18. The sock includes a two-dimensional animal head design 20 depicted on the body 12 of the sock which is the generally the same or similar visually as an ornament 22 that is also in the form of an animal head. The design 20 may be formed by stitching, printing or other conventional means. In this

- 5 embodiment the images provided are bunny heads 20 which correspond directly to the three-dimensional bunny head ornament 22 also shown in Fig 1. Although a number of bunny heads 20 are shown in this particular embodiment, it is to be understood that another quantity and/or size of heads may be depicted as well. Similarly, an infinite number of different or whole figures, including ducks, cartoon
10 characters and the like may be also used instead of a bunny head.

Generally, the three-dimensional ornament 22 has a fabric skin or casing 24, as shown in Fig. 2. The use of a skin 24, following well-known techniques for making stuffed objects, enables the ornament to assume shapes that are more intricate and multifaceted.

- 15 Skins used in the construction of stuffed animals are well known in the art. In the context of a stuffed animal, a skin is generally formed by stitching together appropriate pieces of material following a pattern, which typically form the head and other parts of the animal's body. In addition, skins may also be used in the construction of other dolls or toys that are not stuffed animals per se. An
20 opening is left through which to stuff the doll. As shown in Fig. 2, the skin 24 is filled with stuffing 26, including materials such as polyester and other fiber fillers. After the skin is stuffed, the opening is stitched closed and the animal figure is completed.

The ornament 22 is attached to the sock with a simple stitch 28, as shown in Fig. 2, directly to the sock body 12 at or near the sock's opening 16 where the foot normally enters at the trim edge 18. Other forms of selectively attaching and/or removing the ornament to or from the sock may optionally be incorporated

5 instead, including snaps, Velcro and the like. Generally, the ornament should be fastened towards the rear of the sock, near the vicinity of the Achilles tendon so that it does not interfere with the user's ability to comfortably ambulate about and wear sneakers or other types of footwear.

The embodiment 10a shown in Fig. 3 is similar in construction to that

10 shown in Fig. 1 in that it provides a three dimensional ornament attached to a sock which relates to a two-dimensional image depicted on the sock. However, in this embodiment, the ornament and image are generally not the same as the ones respectively provided in the embodiment of Fig. 1. Rather, in this embodiment, the two-dimensional image is a well-known phrase, "Lucky 7," 30 and the ornament is a stuffed die 32. Thus, the three-dimensional object, the die 32, is related to the textual phrase "Lucky 7" 30. It should be understood that other objects and phrases may be used instead of those embodied in Fig. 3. In addition, it should be understood that the ornament and phrase could be switched with one another such that, for example, a "Lucky 7" ornament can be

15 attached to the sock bearing an image of a die or set of dice.

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In this embodiment 10a, the relationship between the three-dimensional ornament and two-dimensional textual phrase depicted as a logo is clear. Well known to gamblers, the "Lucky 7" image derives from the dice game of craps,

where rolling a seven wins, and thus the dice that roll seven are a symbol of gambler's luck.

- The embodiment 10b shown in Fig. 4 is similar in construction to that shown in Figs. 1 and 3 in that it provides a three-dimensional ornament attached
- 5 to a sock which relates to a two-dimensional image depicted on the sock.
- Additionally, similar to that of Fig. 3, the embodiment 10b of Fig. 4 has an ornament and image which are generally not the same as the ones respectively provided in the embodiment of Fig. 1. In this embodiment 10b the two-dimensional image is a letterman "T" design 34 and the ornament is a stuffed old-fashioned cheerleader megaphone 36. Accordingly, the ornament 36 is also related to the two-dimensional pattern 34. Particularly, the megaphone 36, which traditionally has been utilized by cheerleaders, evokes the "letterman image," including the associated apparel such as letterman jerseys and letterman jackets worn by athletes who are the cheerleaders' counterparts.
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- 15 The embodiment 10c shown in Fig. 5 has two-dimensional text spelling out the action "CALL ME" 38 located on the body of the sock and an ornament in the form a cellular phone 40 which directly corresponds to the action. It should be understood that other actions and objects could be used instead of those used in the embodiment 10c. For example a miniaturized stuffed cake or
- 20 surfboard can be used as the ornament and the text "BAKE" or "SURF" can respectively replace the text depicted on the body of the sock.

The embodiment 10d shown in Fig. 6 has two-dimensional text and depictions which both correspond to the ornament attached to sock. Similar to

the embodiment shown in Fig. 1, the two-dimensional star 44 is the same or similar to the star ornament 46 that is attached to the body of the sock. However, in this embodiment 10d, additional textual information in the form of the word "Star" 42, which is the name for the ornament, is provided on the body of the
5 sock as well.

As a result of the increased appeal and entertainment afforded by the sock, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers alike can respectively generate increased sales and revenue. Since almost an infinite number of additional three-dimensional ornaments relating to two-dimensional indicia can be created,
10 sellers of the sock will have a larger assortment of goods to sell which is always important to consumers, especially women. Similarly, as a result of the sock's overall appeal, it can be marketed and sold to the public as an "impulse item" that is featured in magazines and circulars and offered for sale on a rack or in a bin located near a cash register. This is significant especially for women and young
15 girls, who are known to be impulsive shoppers, especially when it comes to fashion, and are inclined to purchase a number of pairs having different embodiments all at once, whether for their own use or as gifts to friends or loved ones.

It is also clear that adults and youngsters, both female and male, can
20 benefit from the invention, depending on their preferences and the particular embodiment of the sock. For instance, both women and young girls can wear the embodiments of Fig 1, while the embodiment 10a of Fig. 3 may be more suitable for female and male adults during a visit to a casino. Other ornaments

and related indicia which can be marketed to women and are "female-friendly" such as a perfume bottle, a cat, a pair of lips and the like may be used. Similarly, "male-friendly" ornaments and related indicia such as a football, baseball mitt, puppy and the like may be used as well.

- 5 In addition to the overall appeal of the ornament in connection with the images shown on the sock, the embodiment of Fig. 1 also specifically provides a system by which an adult can teach young children who are just learning to dress themselves with the help of their parents about the difference between two-dimensional images and three-dimensional objects. For instance, an adult can
- 10 first query a child as to the difference between the two-dimensional image and three-dimensional version of the image. After the child responds that they are the same or that they do not know, a parent can help explain some of the differences. This is important since from the outset of their educational instruction a child's activities are dominated by writing and drawing in two
- 15 dimensions, notwithstanding the fact that they visualize objects in three dimensions. Accordingly, it is very important to help children recognize the differences between the two. The invention would promote this important lesson each and every day in the context a child's clothing which is similarly worn every day, even when the child is home from school.
- 20 As a child gradually comprehends the difference between two- and three-dimensional versions of the same or similar objects, other embodiments of the present invention may be used to further the child's command of this and other related concepts. For instance, when a child is first learning to read, the

embodiment 10d of Fig. 6 can help a child relate the star 46 to the written word "Star" 42. This will help build and reinforce a child's vocabulary and other related skills. Progressively, as a child learns simple verbs, the embodiment 10c of Fig. 5 can similarly reinforce these skills. Finally, when the child is more advanced 5 he/she can begin to make mental connections between particular ornaments and phrases or designs as shown in the embodiments 10a, 10b of Figs. 3 and 4 respectively.

Although the invention has been described with reference to particular embodiments, it is to be understood that these embodiments are merely 10 illustrative of the application of the principles of the invention. Thus it is to be understood that numerous modifications may be made in the illustrative embodiments of the invention and other arrangements may be devised without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.